

FAQ for Forresidents.ba

Can I travel to neighboring countries (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, Croatia) with a BiH resident card without a passport?

No. A temporary or permanent residence permit in BiH is not a travel document and does not replace a passport. To cross the state border, you generally need a valid travel document that is recognized by the country of destination. A BiH residence permit proves your regulated status in BiH, but does not in itself grant a universal right to visa-free entry to Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Albania or North Macedonia. Whether you need a visa for a specific country depends primarily on your citizenship and the rules of that country. The SPS also treats a valid travel document as the basic document for the entry of foreigners into BiH. ([SPS.GOV.BA](https://www.sps.gov.ba))

What is the longest I can stay outside Bosnia and Herzegovina if I have temporary or permanent residence?

If you have a **temporary stay**, The Law on Foreigners provides for the possibility of cancellation of residence if you are continuously absent from BiH **longer than 180 days during the approved temporary stay**, and you have not previously reported to the Social Security Office and submitted evidence of justification for your absence. Staying may also be problematic if circumstances clearly indicate that you have no intention of returning to BiH. ([Official Gazette](#))

If you have **permanent residence**, it may be cancelled if it is determined that **you have not resided in BiH for one year**, or even after a short absence if the circumstances clearly show that you do not intend to return and permanently reside in BiH. A special two-year period applies to former Blue Card holders. ([Official Gazette](#))

How do I open a company in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a foreigner and what documentation do I need?

A foreigner can be the founder and owner of a company in BiH. The procedure depends on whether you are registering the company in **Federation of BiH, Republika Srpska or Brčko District**, as each system has its own registration procedure. As a rule, you will need identification documents of the founders, a memorandum of association, proof of capital where applicable, registration with the competent registry/court, tax registration and a business account.

It is important to distinguish three things: **company ownership, right to work and right to reside**. Just opening a company does not automatically grant you the right to reside or work in it. There are additional requirements for the specific immigration route for foreign founders, including prescribed requirements related to employees, wages and tax compliance. This is covered in detail in our **G09 — Starting and Running a Company in Bosnia & Herzegovina as a Foreigner**.

Which lawyers can I hire to represent me and who speak English/Russian/Chinese/Turkish?

For English, there is a relatively large selection of law firms that work with international clients. For example, the US Embassy in BiH's public legal aid list lists several domestic law firms and the languages in which they provide services; some firms explicitly list English, German, and other languages. International firms such as Wolf Theiss and CMS also have a presence or teams for BiH and international clients. ([U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#))

What documents do I need to bring from my home country to apply for residency in BiH?

The exact documentation depends on the grounds for residence — work, family reunification, education, real estate, founding a company, or other grounds. Therefore, there is no one universal list.

For the first temporary stay, documents that often need to be obtained from the home country may include: **certificate of no criminal record/criminal status**, and civil documents such as **birth or marriage certificates** when relevant to the specific basis. For certain work, educational or business grounds, diplomas, certificates or corporate documents may also be required. The SPS publishes different checklists according to the exact basis of residence. ([SPS.GOV.BA](#))

Foreign documents may require **Apostille or other form of legalization and certified translation**, but this is not a universal rule for every country and every document — an international treaty may eliminate the need for an Apostille. Therefore, it is best to check the requirements for a specific country and document before obtaining them.

How do I re-register as a resident if I change my residential address?

Foreigner with approved **temporary stay** must report a change of residential address within **48 hours**. The application is submitted to the competent organizational unit of the Service for Foreigners' Affairs or the police. The SPS explicitly states the same rule in its current information for foreigners. ([SPS.GOV.BA](#))

If you have **permanent residence**, you must report your change of residence within **eight days**. ([SPS.GOV.BA](#))

The required documentation depends on your accommodation and the relevant office, so you should check the current local procedure before leaving.

How to buy a car/motorcycle/truck in BiH as a resident and register it in your name?

A foreigner can own a vehicle and there is a possibility of registering the vehicle in BiH, but the procedure depends on your residence status and the specific vehicle. The law also explicitly provides for temporary registration of vehicles owned by foreigners temporarily residing in BiH. Proof of ownership, technical inspection, insurance and other documents prescribed by the registration rules are relevant for registration. ([IDDEEA](#))

It is especially important if you bring to BiH your **own vehicle with foreign plates**. For certain foreigners granted temporary residence exceeding six months or permanent residence, a foreign-owned vehicle used in BiH must be registered in BiH; the amendments to the law

provide for the longest **three months** from the relevant entry or acquisition of status for the use of foreign plates in the above cases.

Can I drive a car in BiH with my foreign driver's license as a resident or do I have to exchange it?

If **you are temporarily residing in BiH**, you may drive on the basis of a valid foreign driving license during your temporary stay, under the terms of the Law. The license must be an appropriate international license or a national license that meets the requirements of the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic. ([IDDEEA](#))

Special rule from **six months** - The law explicitly stipulates that for a foreigner who has been granted **permanent residence**: a valid foreign driving license may be used for six months from entering BiH or from acquiring permanent residence, if that is more favorable, after which a replacement for a BiH license is relevant. ([IDDEEA](#))

The replacement and issuance of driving licenses is carried out by the cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs in the FBiH, the Ministries of Internal Affairs of the Republika Srpska, or the competent authority of the Brčko District, according to the place of residence. ([IDDEEA](#))

Can I buy a boat in my name as a foreigner/resident and use it for personal purposes?

Yes, it is possible to purchase and register a vessel, but in BiH this is not a single state procedure and jurisdiction depends on the area of registration/navigation.

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the captain's offices keep registers of boats and other vessels and have a specific registration procedure. Registration requires, among other things, **proof of ownership, proof of boat seaworthiness, appropriate technical/calibration documents, motorboat insurance and prescribed fees**. The Federal Ministry also has special procedures and fees for foreign citizens and foreign vessels. ([Transport and Communications Ministry](#))

For RS and Brčko, their regulations and the competent authority should be checked. There should also be separated **boat ownership/registration** from the person's right to operate it, which may require an appropriate certificate or permit.

What trails and mountains do you recommend for hiking in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- **Trebević and the surroundings of Sarajevo**— accessible for shorter and medium-demanding tours, especially practical for Sarajevo residents.
- **Skakavac / Ozren near Sarajevo**— forest trails and a waterfall, suitable for easy and medium-demanding excursions; the Tourist Board of KS specifically promotes it for hiking. ([Visit Sarajevo](#))
- **Bjelasnica**— a large selection of easy and more challenging mountain routes near Sarajevo. ([Visit Sarajevo](#))

- **Čvrsnica / Hajdučka vrata**— one of the most attractive high mountain destinations, but significantly more demanding. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **Zelengora / Sutjeska National Park**— a great combination of hiking, lakes and wild nature; for more experienced hikers there are also Maglić and the Perućica area. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **Treskavica**— extremely beautiful, but many routes require good preparation; tourist sources also warn of poor markings on some sections. ([Visit B&H](#))

What beaches/picnic areas/lakes do you recommend in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- **Boracko Lake**— a natural mountain lake near Konjic, popular for swimming, relaxation and recreation. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **Blidinje Lake and Blidinje Nature Park**— great for a day or weekend trip, especially in combination with Čvrsnica and the surrounding mountains. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **Prokoško Lake**— a mountain lake on Vranica and a very attractive summer destination. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **Jablanica Lake**— a convenient base for summer vacations and water activities, between Konjic and Jablanica. The Jablanica area connects the lakes with Prenj, Čvrsnica and Via Dinarica. ([Visit B&H](#))
- **The source of Bosnia**— one of the most practical family picnic spots for Sarajevo residents. ([Visit Sarajevo](#))
- **Neum**— for those looking for the coast and beaches within BiH.

Which mobile operators do you recommend and can I be a postpaid user as a resident?

The three main mobile network operators in BiH are **BH Telecom**, **m:tel** i **HT Eronet**, which is confirmed by the Communications Regulatory Agency. ([docs.rak.ba](#))